

The migration of Red Knots through Porsangerfjord in spring 2009: a progress report on the Norwegian Knot Project

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Wilson, J., Dick, W.J.A., Jackson, D., Jackson, L., Lenton, G., Soot, K.M., Stanyard, D., Strugnell, R., Swinfen, B.J., Swinfen, R.C. & Wilson, R. 2009. The migration of Red Knots through Porsangerfjord in spring 2009: a progress report on the Norwegian Knot Project. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 116(3): 160–166.

Keywords: shorebird, Red Knot, *Calidris canutus*, subspecies *islandica*, migration, stopover, Porsangerfjord, Varangerfjord, Norway

We report on the results of the Norwegian Knot Project for 2009. The stopover population in Porsanger, N Norway, was estimated at 43,000. Knots arrived from 12 to 17 May. Also it was estimated that there were 5,000 knots in Varangerfjord, 200 km east of Porsanger, during 23–25 May. The distribution continued to shift towards the north-east. Eighteen Porsanger-marked knots were sighted at Varangerfjord, bringing the total seen there to 29. This demonstrates that Porsanger knots are probably spread throughout those that stopover in N Norway. Mean wing and bill lengths of Varangerfjord knots were significantly longer than those marked in Porsanger, but the small sample size from Varangerfjord was biased by three large individuals. One Canadian-marked bird was seen there, indicating that the Varangerfjord birds are *islandica*. Resighted flagged knots in Porsanger showed a high return rate of 37%. The first sightings from the breeding grounds are reported. Two knots flagged at the end of May 2007 and 2009 were sighted breeding in June at Zackenberg in NE Greenland, and one bird colour marked at Zackenberg in 2003 and sighted in Porsanger in 2006 and 2009 was seen breeding in June 2009 at Zackenberg. A bird marked at Alert, Canada, on 10 June 2008 and caught at Porsanger on 27 May 2009 was resighted at Alert between 26 and 29 June. One Canadian-flagged bird was also sighted in Porsanger and one in Varanger. The masses of these three birds when caught in N Norway were in the range 160–180 g. This shows that knots in N Norway, which depart at a lower mass than knots in Iceland, reach breeding areas 1,700–2,300 km away. There were six unusual sightings in June of birds marked on 26 and 27 May 2009, two in Norway, two in England and two in the Netherlands. Possible reasons for birds not being on the breeding grounds in June were strong unfavourable winds in Norway at the time of departure and bad weather in June on the breeding grounds in north Canada.